Newsletter Editor Report

Results of 2019 Auxin Training Survey

by Zachary Taylor

In my first year as editor of the WSSNC Newsletter, I've been working with Rick Seagroves, previous editor, to get my feet wet in this role. I hope to have a consistent newsletter release date moving forward. Consider this a "special edition." I plan to release a fall and Spring Newsletter from this point forward, and use this opportunity to highlight all of the hard work of our faculty and graduate students, as well as promote happenings in weed science across North Carolina.

As you are likely aware, Dr, Cahoon and Dr. Everman are currently in the midst of the fourth year of required auxin training to growers so that they can meet the 24(c) requirements of using dicamba or 2,4-D over the top of Xtend and Enlist crops, respectively. Surveys have been distributed at training for the past three years, and yours truly has been entering those results. I would like to give you a look back at the results of surveys distrubted in the winter of 2019, which provide a quick snapshot of the data we have been able to collect about the use of this technology in North Carolina so far.

In 2019, there were 771 total responses to the survey, including 663 growers. Grower responses represented about 403,000 acres of soybeans, and 164,000 acres of cotton. According to respondents, 62% of planted soybeans planted were Xtend and 50% of those acres were treated with dicamba. Those who planted cotton, planted 56% of their acres with Xtend traits and applied dicamba on 52% of those acres. Also, 21% of cotton acres were planted in Enlist traits and 67% of those planted acres were treated with 2,4-D.

Of the 663 growers surveyed, 27 reported self-inflicted crop injury, and another 37 reported crop injury from a neighbor. Soybeans accounted for the most injury by acreage across the state, while tobacco injury was most costly to the grower. Soybean growers reported a wide range of losses per acre, which skewed the average loss per acre, however, the median reported loss was $30 per acre. Reported tobacco losses due to off-target movement were much more consistent, ranging from $3,437 to $5,000 per acre. The average crop lost from off-target movement to a tobacco crop was reported at $4,359.

Most growers who used dicamba or 2,4-D reported that they followed all label recommendations to avoid off-target drift, including 71% who claimed to have always followed buffer requirements. The least commonly followed label requirement was to check Driftwatch or other online sensitive crop database before spraying.

Growers we asked to estimate the economic benefit of 2,4-D or Dicamba tolerant crops to their farm operation, if they used these products, on a per acre basis. Growers estimated an average benefit of $36 per acre in soybeans and $32 per acre in cotton, though several commented that they were unsure at this time or chose to not answer this question. When asked if they thought the benefits from in-season auxin use in soybeans and cotton were worth the challenges involved, over 88% said yes. Out of 557 soybean growers, 529 said they would plant Xtend soybeans in the 2019 growing season, but over 30% those planning to plant Xtend traits said they did not plan to use any dicamba. Of cotton growers surveyed, 193 of 322 said they planned to plant either Xtend or Enlist cotton, but over 38% said they did not plan to spray an auxin product in 2019.

As for the success of these training sessions, 94% of those who attended had attended previous training felt that training helped them prevent off-target movement.

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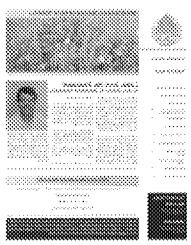

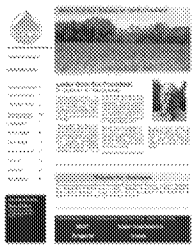

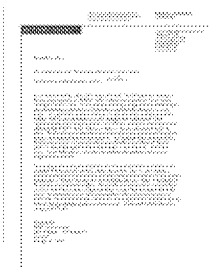

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